



Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

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BUDGET AND SERVICE DELIVERY INITIATIVES FY 2007-09

Every Day in Washington State ...

- Women are abused and forced to seek protection for themselves and their children
- Frail elderly homeowners are victimized by fraudulent predatory lending scams
- Disabled children are denied necessary learning assistance so that they can perform well in school
- Families are denied essential governmental assistance to which they are legally entitled
- Low wage workers are discriminated against
- Health care providers deny services to low income patients legally eligible for charity care services

... Justice is Wanting:

- More than three quarters of all low income households experience at least one important civil legal problem each year. Of these, nearly nine in ten do not get the legal help they need to solve that problem.
- Civil legal needs often relate to fundamental issues such as personal and family safety, shelter and security, access to essential services and the like. Women and children disproportionately experience civil legal needs, with domestic violence survivors having the highest number of needs of any demographic group surveyed.

The Office of Civil Legal Aid: Working to Secure Justice

The Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) was established by the Legislature in 2005 as an independent judicial branch agency to administer and oversee the state's investment in civil legal aid services.

OCLA 2007-09 Civil Legal Aid Budget and Client Service Priorities:

- A. Maintain Existing Levels of Client Service**
- B. Establish Legal Aid Presence in Rural Washington**
- B. Achieve New Efficiency by Unifying Intake, Advice and Referral in King County**

Total FY 2007-09 Budget Request: \$22.475 Million

Total New Funding Requested: \$5.268 Million

Office of Civil Legal Aid: Policy Level Objectives

Meeting the Justice Needs of Rural Washingtonians

Low income residents of rural Washington lack access to essential legal aid services. Funding will enable OCLA to establish civil legal aid presence in the following rural areas that have *no local legal aid provider*:

- Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille Counties
- Whitman, Garfield, Asotin Counties
- Grant and Adams Counties
- Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties
- Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties
- Clallam and Jefferson Counties

Funding will also allow OCLA to upgrade civil legal aid presence to the minimum level of 2 FTE attorneys in the following rural areas:

- Okanogan County
- Benton and Franklin Counties

Additional low income clients served: **Between 1100 and 1350**

Unifying Client Intake, Advice and Referral Services in King County

King County is home to the most populous and diverse low income communities and hosts the largest number of separate and independent legal aid programs in the state. Because Low income residents of King County do not have access to the Northwest Justice Project's centralized CLEAR system, they are forced to "program-hop" in search of the right provider to address their critical civil legal needs. Many are forced to travel from remote rural areas of the county to downtown Seattle to get help with matters that can effectively be addressed through telephone-based legal assistance.

A unified intake, advice and referral system will be coordinated with the regional 211 system. It will effectively integrate client intake, access and referral services for the more than 190,000 low income residents of King County. A "one-stop" gateway into the system will ensure that those who need legal assistance have their legal problems timely and consistently diagnosed and that they are served by the appropriate legal aid provider.

Additional low income clients served: **7,500**